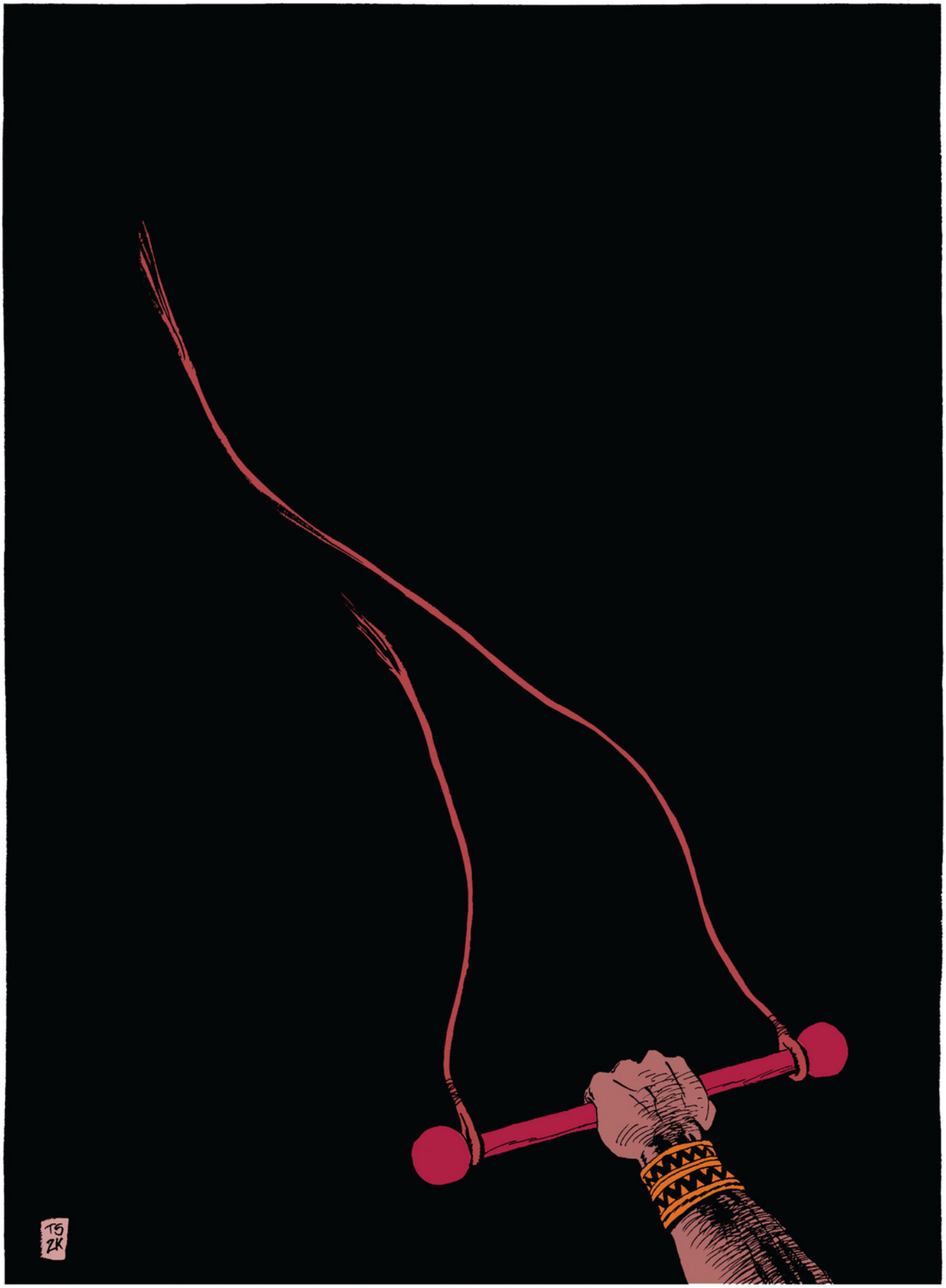
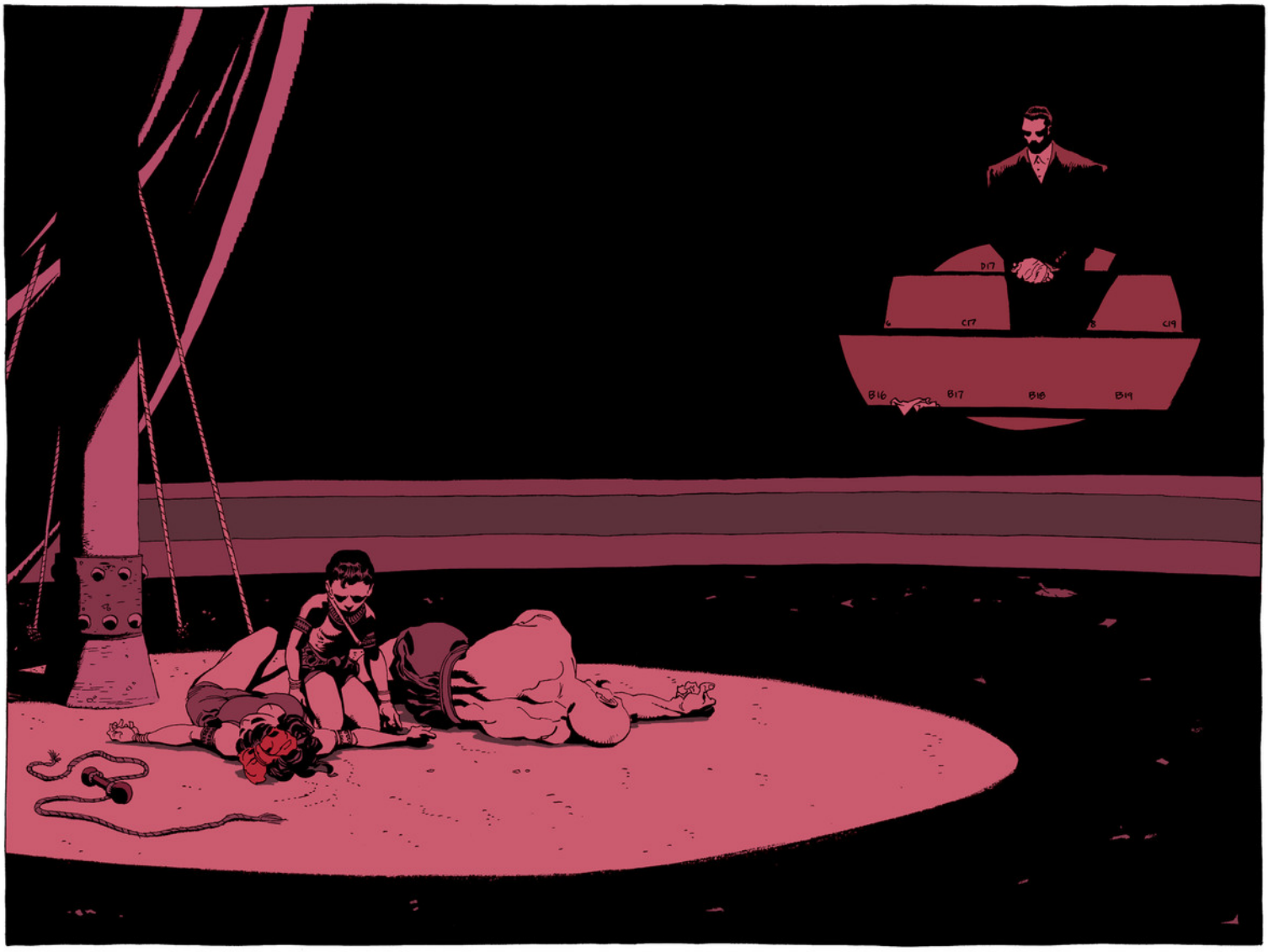
CHAPTER NINE ORPHANS


TS
ZK

HALY
FAMILY
CIRCUS


D17
C17
C19
B16
B17
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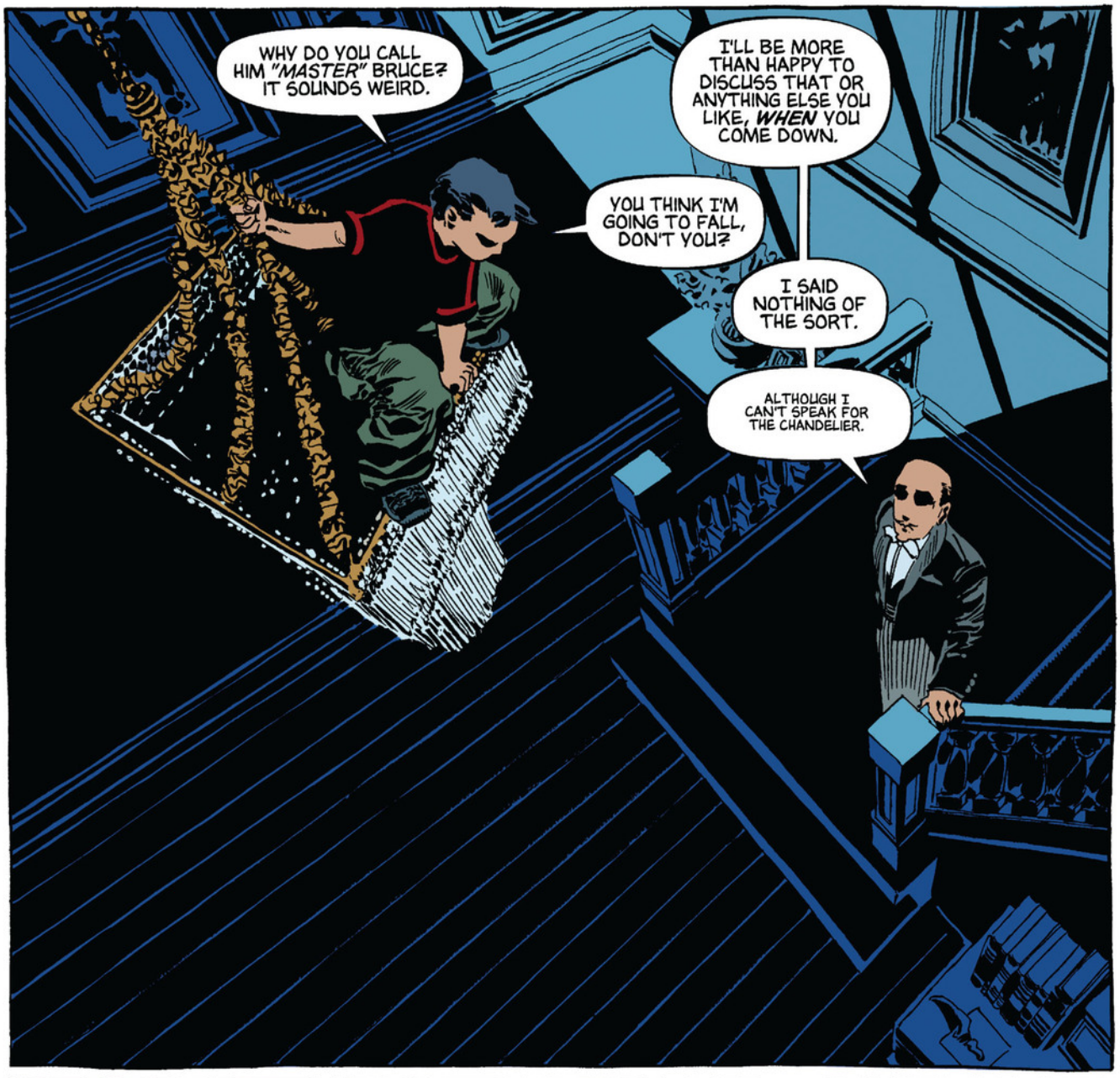
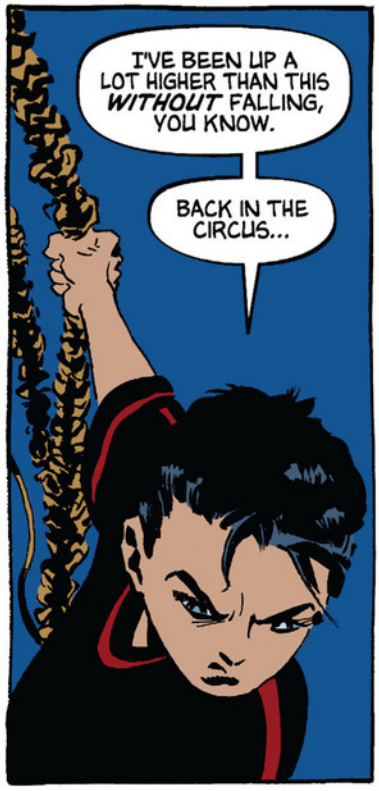
B19

Father's Day in Gotham City. It is over one hundred degrees even at night.
Out at Wayne Manor. In the house that once belonged to my parents.
There is a new guest.
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE MR. WAYNE IS?

MASTER BRUCE OFTEN KEEPS UNUSUAL HOURS, DICK.
AND I'M QUITE CERTAIN HE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD COME DOWN FROM UP THERE.
His name is Dick Grayson.


WHY DO YOU CALL HIM "MASTER" BRUCE? IT SOUNDS WEIRD.
I'LL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO DISCUSS THAT OR ANYTHING ELSE YOU LIKE, WHEN YOU COME DOWN.
YOU THINK I'M GOING TO FALL, DON'T YOU?
I SAID NOTHING OF THE SORT.
ALTHOUGH I CAN'T SPEAK FOR THE CHANDELIER.


I'VE BEEN UP A LOT HIGHER THAN THIS WITHOUT FALLING, YOU KNOW.
BACK IN THE CIRCUS...

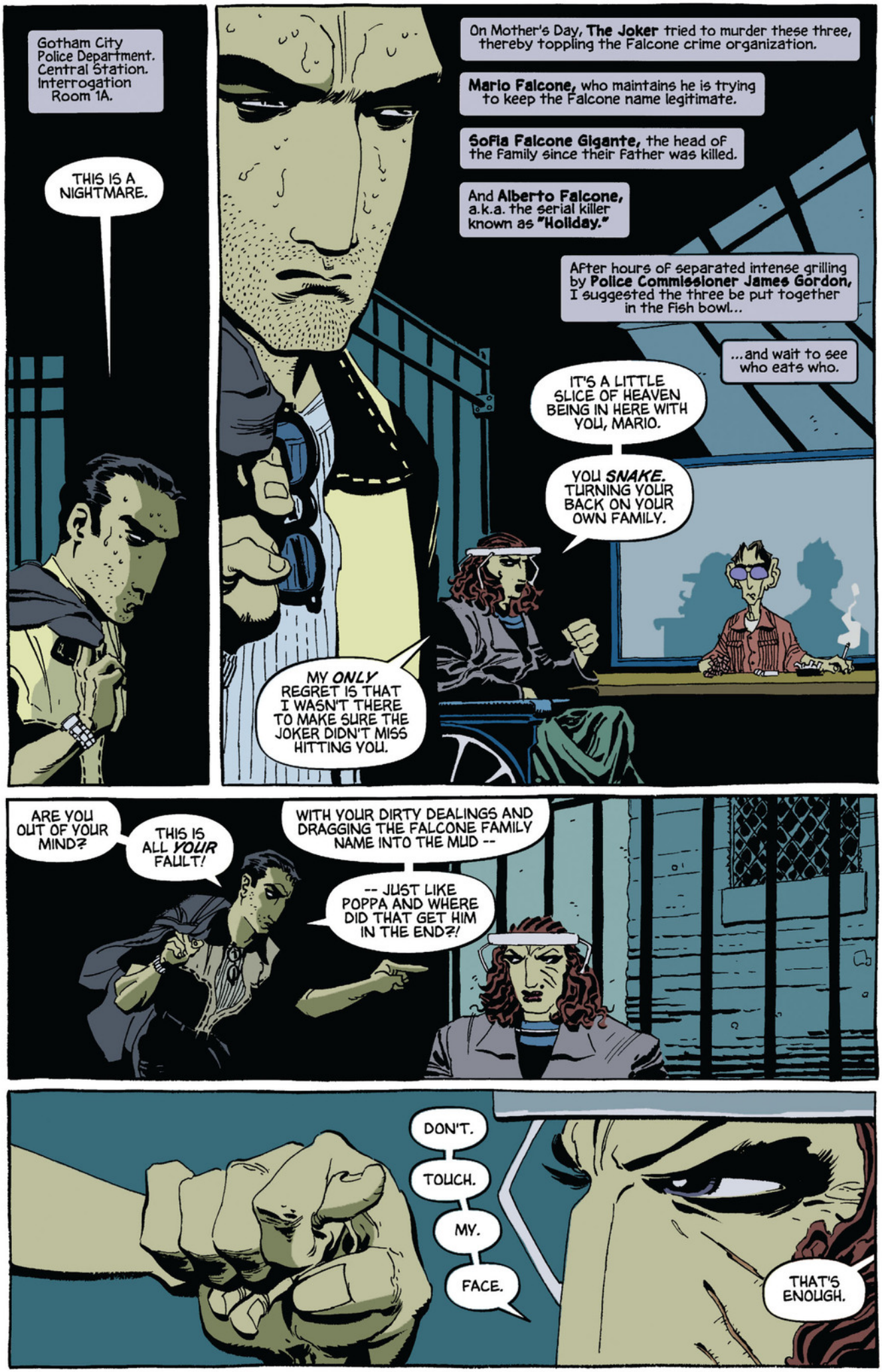
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO MY PARENTS WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT!
MY FATHER ALWAYS TESTED THE ROPES.
HE...

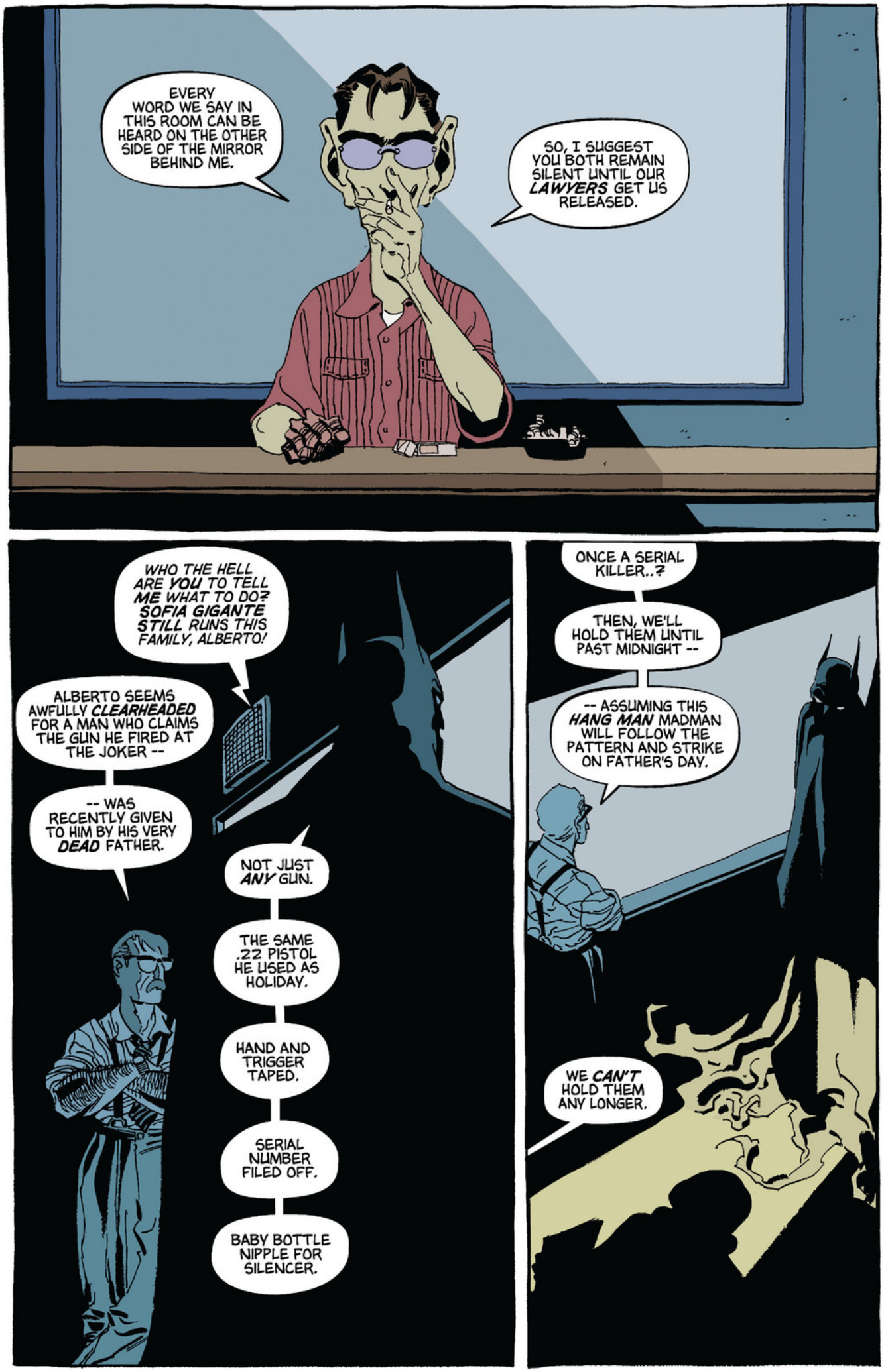
IT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT...

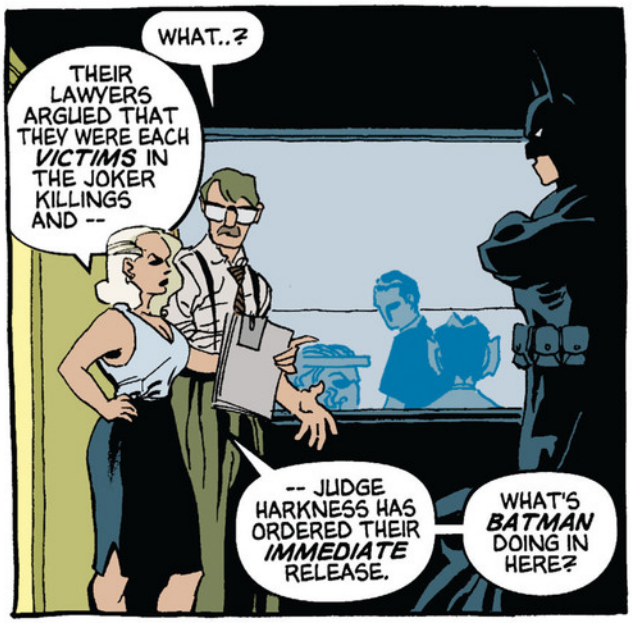
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
THE ROPE JUST BROKE AND THERE AIN'T NOBODY WHO CAN PROVE OTHERWISE.
SO QUIT WORRYIN', WILL YA, EDDIE?

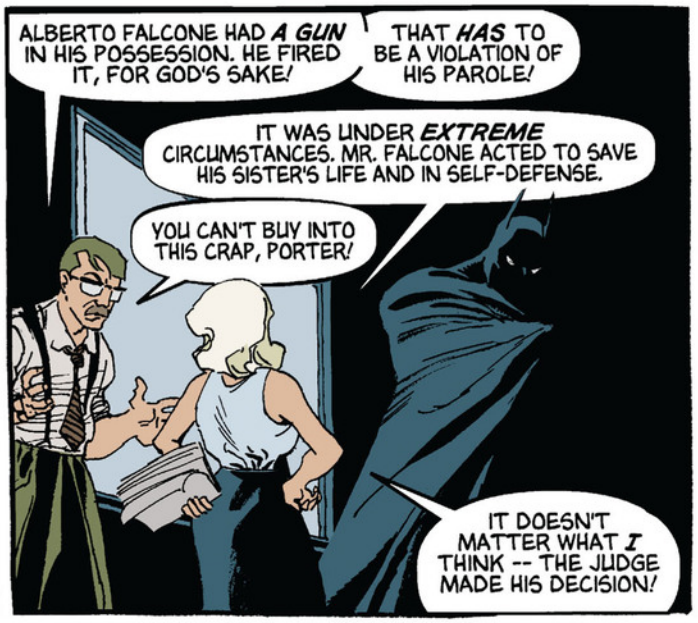
JEEZ. COULD IT GET ANY HOTTER?
MAYBE WE SHOULD TALK TO THE MARONIS, ZUCCO. GET THEIR LOOK ON THINGS.
GET TOSSED IN THE RIVER IS MORE LIKE IT.
NO. WE WAIT THIS OUT. I'M GONNA TAKE DOWN THAT CIRCUS AND WE'RE GONNA USE IT LIKE WE PLANNED.
Y'KNOW, THOSE ACROBATS YOU WHACKED.
THEY GOT A KID WHO MIGHT SQUAWK.
The Ox Club.
Anthony "Fats" Zucco looks after the "Gentlemen's Club" for the Maroni brothers.
Zucco doesn't have many friends. But, he trusts Edward Skeevers.

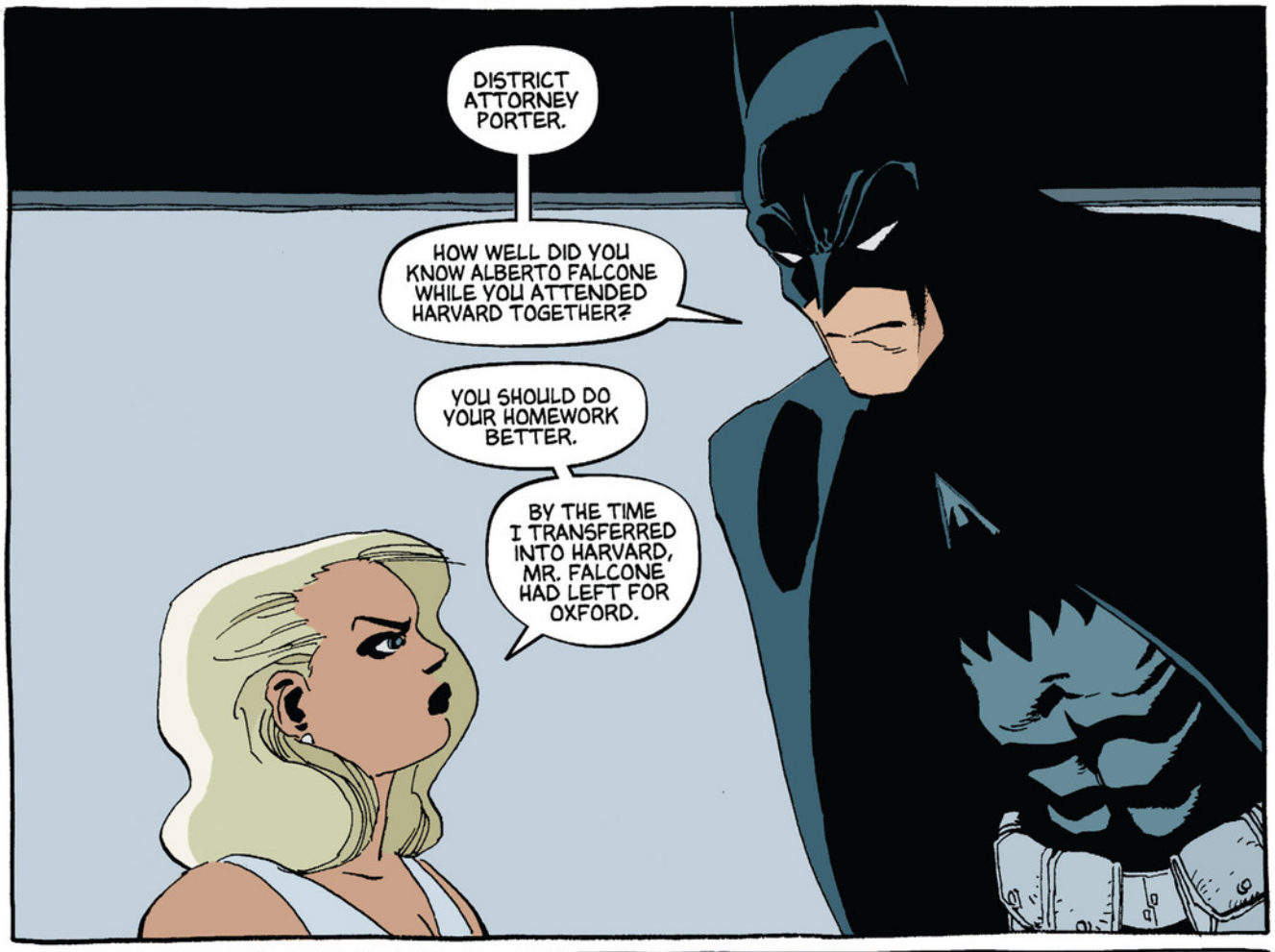
HEY, I GOT EARS, TOO.
HE'S CAMPIN' OUT WITH THAT RICH GUY...
THAT BRUCE WAYNE...


Gotham City Police Department. Central Station. Interrogation Room 1A.
THIS IS A NIGHTMARE.
On Mother's Day, **The Joker** tried to murder these three, thereby toppling the Falcone crime organization.
Mario Falcone, who maintains he is trying to keep the Falcone name legitimate.
Sofia Falcone Gigante, the head of the Family since their Father was killed.
And **Alberto Falcone,** a.k.a. the serial killer known as **"Holiday."**
After hours of separated intense grilling by **Police Commissioner James Gordon,** I suggested the three be put together in the Fish bowl...
...and wait to see who eats who.
IT'S A LITTLE SLICE OF HEAVEN BEING IN HERE WITH YOU, MARIO.
YOU *SNAKE.* TURNING YOUR BACK ON YOUR OWN FAMILY.
MY *ONLY* REGRET IS THAT I WASN'T THERE TO MAKE SURE THE JOKER DIDN'T MISS HITTING YOU.
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?
THIS IS ALL *YOUR* FAULT!
WITH YOUR DIRTY DEALINGS AND DRAGGING THE FALCONE FAMILY NAME INTO THE MUD --
-- JUST LIKE POPPA AND WHERE DID THAT GET HIM IN THE END?!
DON'T.
TOUCH.
MY.
FACE.
THAT'S ENOUGH.

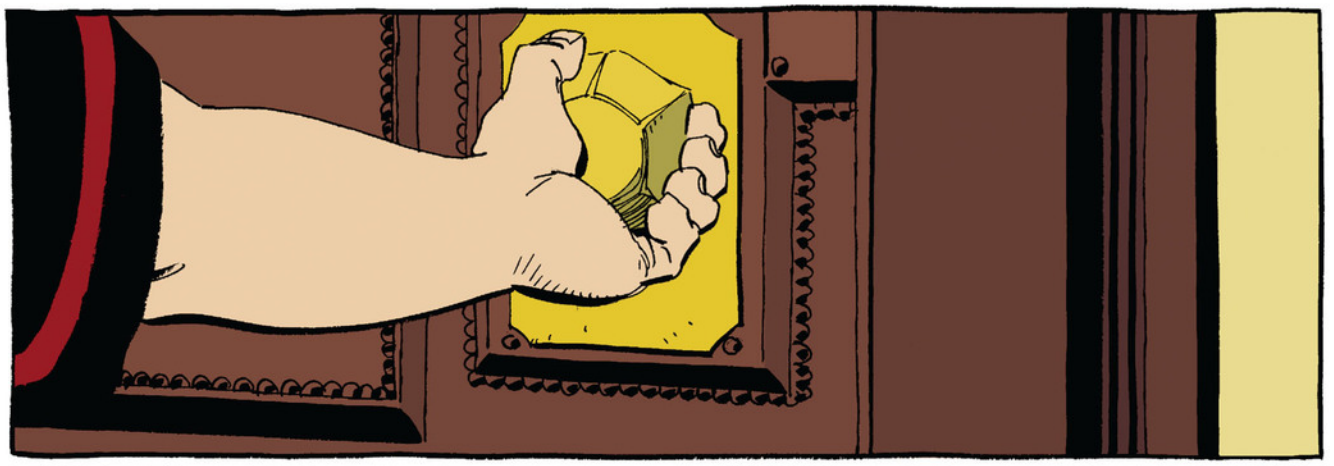

EVERY WORD WE SAY IN THIS ROOM CAN BE HEARD ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR BEHIND ME.
SO, I SUGGEST YOU BOTH REMAIN SILENT UNTIL OUR LAWYERS GET US RELEASED.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO? SOFIA GIGANTE STILL RUNS THIS FAMILY, ALBERTO!
ALBERTO SEEMS AWFULLY CLEARHEADED FOR A MAN WHO CLAIMS THE GUN HE FIRED AT THE JOKER --
-- WAS RECENTLY GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS VERY DEAD FATHER.
NOT JUST ANY GUN.
THE SAME .22 PISTOL HE USED AS HOLIDAY.
HAND AND TRIGGER TAPED.
SERIAL NUMBER FILED OFF.
BABY BOTTLE NIPPLE FOR SILENCER.
ONCE A SERIAL KILLER..?
THEN, WE'LL HOLD THEM UNTIL PAST MIDNIGHT --
-- ASSUMING THIS HANG MAN MADMAN WILL FOLLOW THE PATTERN AND STRIKE ON FATHER'S DAY.
WE CAN'T HOLD THEM ANY LONGER.

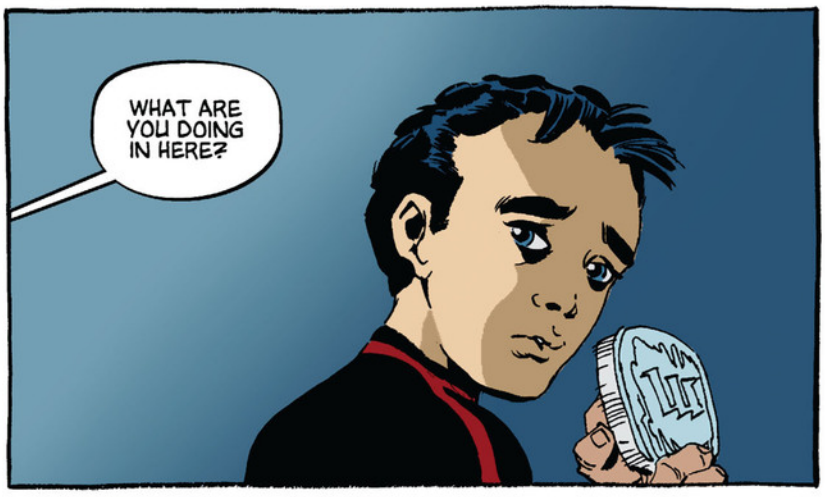

WHAT..?
THEIR LAWYERS ARGUED THAT THEY WERE EACH VICTIMS IN THE JOKER KILLINGS AND --
-- JUDGE HARKNESS HAS ORDERED THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.
WHAT'S BATMAN DOING IN HERE?

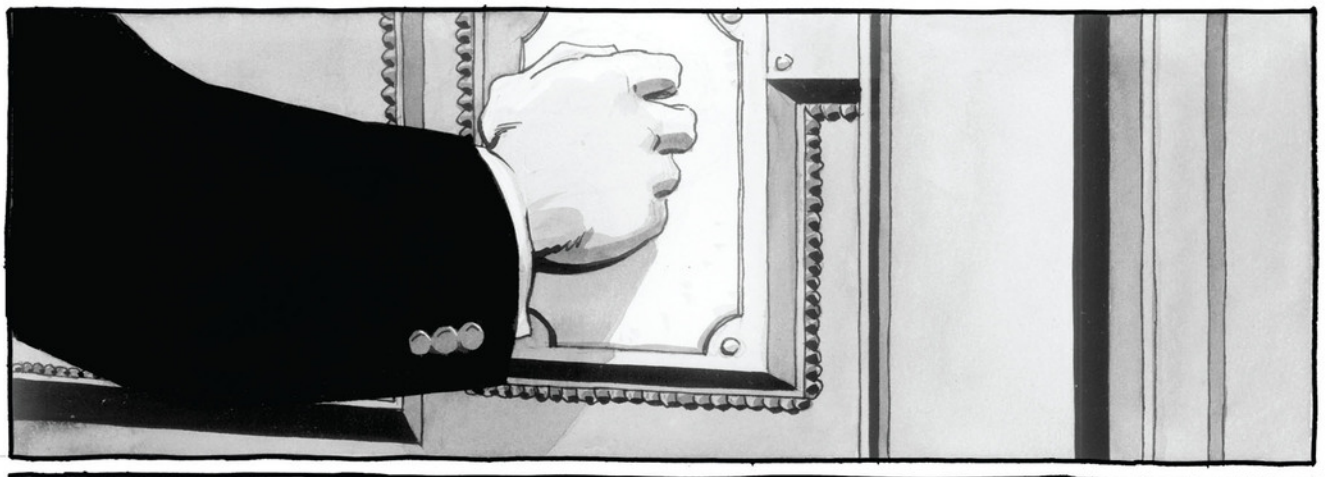

ALBERTO FALCONE HAD A GUN IN HIS POSSESSION. HE FIRED IT, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
THAT HAS TO BE A VIOLATION OF HIS PAROLE!
IT WAS UNDER EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES. MR. FALCONE ACTED TO SAVE HIS SISTER'S LIFE AND IN SELF-DEFENSE.
YOU CAN'T BUY INTO THIS CRAP, PORTER!
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT I THINK -- THE JUDGE MADE HIS DECISION!

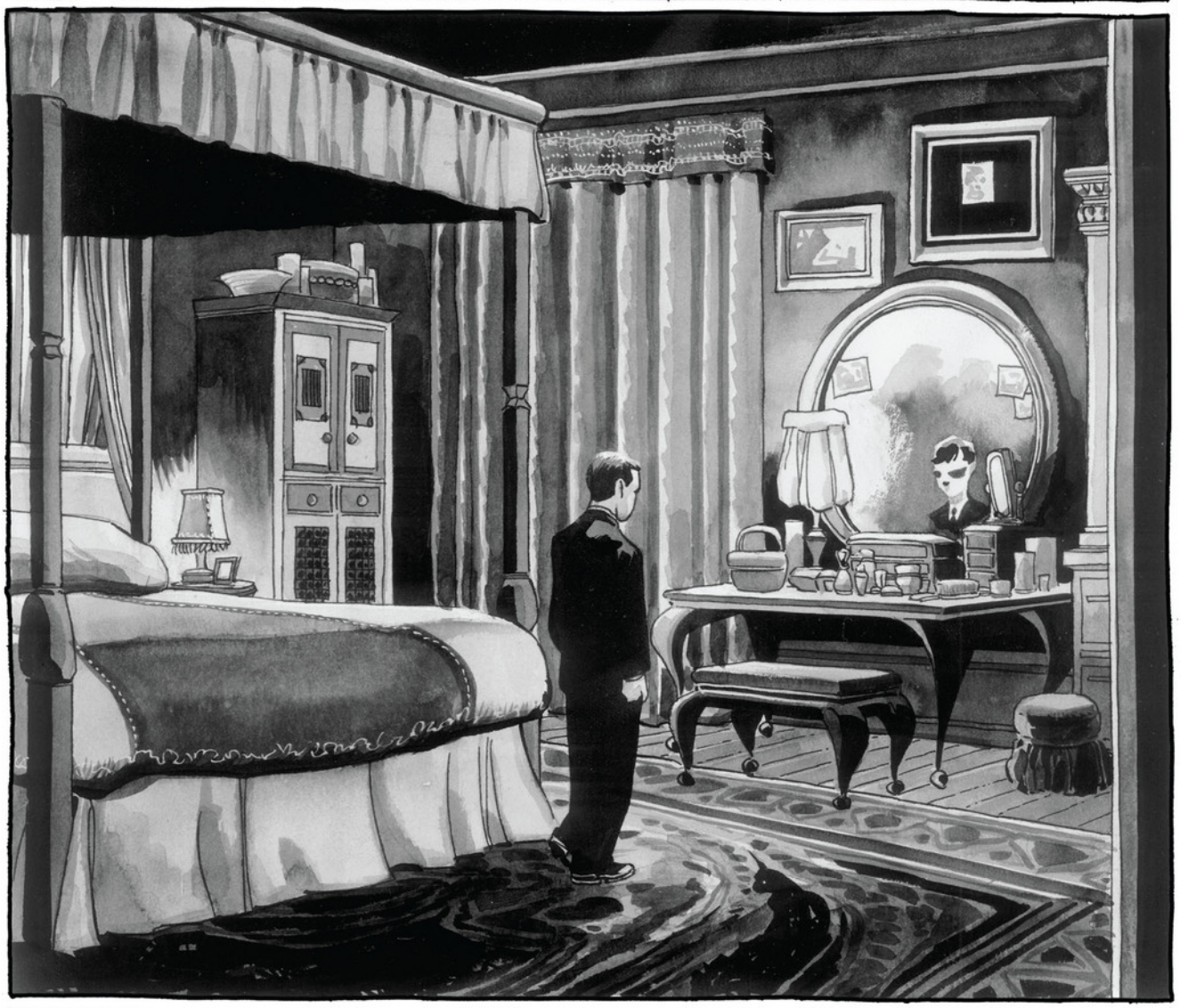

DISTRICT ATTORNEY PORTER.
HOW WELL DID YOU KNOW ALBERTO FALCONE WHILE YOU ATTENDED HARVARD TOGETHER?
YOU SHOULD DO YOUR HOMEWORK BETTER.
BY THE TIME I TRANSFERRED INTO HARVARD, MR. FALCONE HAD LEFT FOR OXFORD.

AND STAY THE HELL OUT OF MY PRIVATE LIFE...
...UNLESS YOU'D LIKE ME TO LOOK INTO YOURS.




WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?

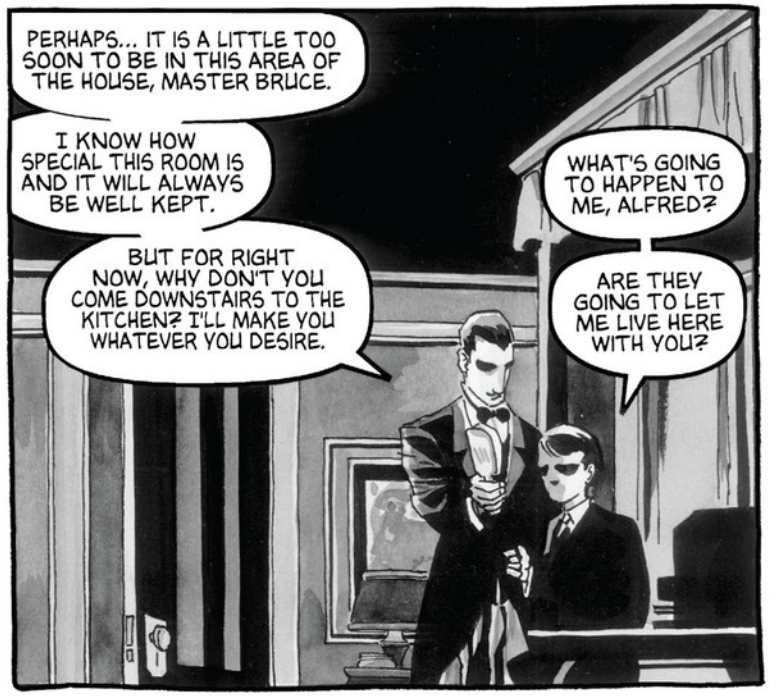




WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?

MY MOM HAD A BRUSH LIKE THIS.
SHE WOULD BRUSH HER HAIR BEFORE EVERY PERFORMANCE.
MY DAD WOULD GET SO MAD. HE NEVER WANTED US TO BE LATE FOR A SHOW.
I WOULD GUESS THAT A BOY'S NATURAL CURIOSITY WOULD BRING HIM UPSTAIRS TO A ROOM WHICH IS CLEARLY CLOSED OFF.
THIS WAS MAST -- MISTER WAYNE'S PARENTS' BEDROOM.
AND WHILE I'M SURE HE'D LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN FOR YOU TO HAVE FREE RUN OF THE HOUSE...
WHY'S HE DOING THIS? TAKING ME IN?
HE DOESN'T KNOW ME FROM ANY OTHER RUBE.
I... IT'S NOT REALLY MY PLACE TO SAY FOR CERTAIN.
BUT, AS A BOY HE HAD THE MISFORTUNE OF WITNESSING HIS PARENTS' DEATHS AS WELL.
SO... WE'RE BOTH ORPHANS...
I NEVER SPENT FATHER'S DAY BY MYSELF.

I REMEMBER MOTHER USING THIS.
SHE WOULD BRUSH HER HAIR WHENEVER THEY WENT OUT TOGETHER.
FATHER WOULD STAND OVER THERE. TYING HIS TIE. GROWING IMPATIENT. NEVER WANTING US TO BE LATE.


PERHAPS... IT IS A LITTLE TOO SOON TO BE IN THIS AREA OF THE HOUSE, MASTER BRUCE.
I KNOW HOW SPECIAL THIS ROOM IS AND IT WILL ALWAYS BE WELL KEPT.
BUT FOR RIGHT NOW, WHY DON'T YOU COME DOWNSTAIRS TO THE KITCHEN? I'LL MAKE YOU WHATEVER YOU DESIRE.
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME, ALFRED?
ARE THEY GOING TO LET ME LIVE HERE WITH YOU?

I... IT'S NOT REALLY MY PLACE TO SAY FOR CERTAIN.
BUT, I WILL ENDEAVOR IN EVERY WAY I CAN TO SEE TO IT YOU ARE BROUGHT UP IN THE SAME MANNER YOUR PARENTS WOULD.
I DON'T SEE HOW THAT CAN HAPPEN.

I'M AN *ORPHAN* AND I WILL HAVE TO GET USED TO IT...

I'M ALL ALONE NOW, ALFRED.

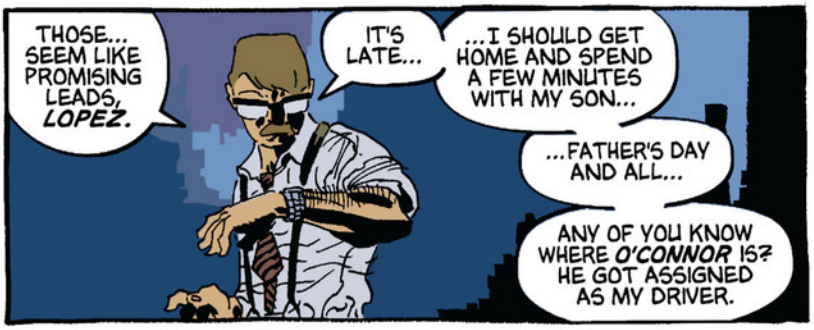
I'M ALL ALONE NOW, MISTER PENNYWORTH.

I CAN ONLY TELL YOU, DICK, SOMETHING I WISH I HAD SAID A LONG TIME AGO TO SOMEONE ELSE.
YOU ARE *NOT* ALONE.
I IMAGINE YOU WILL NEVER BE AGAIN...

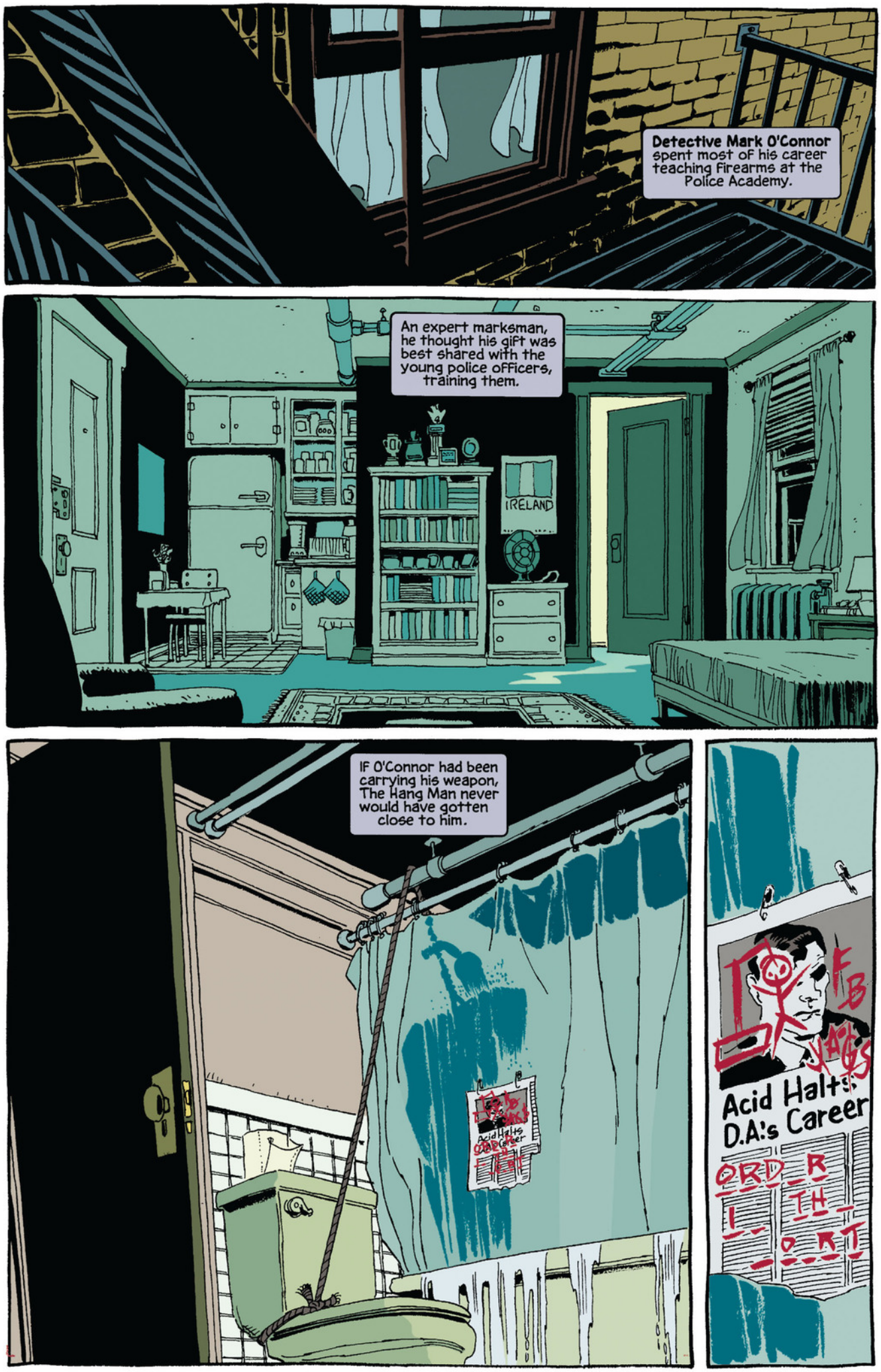
THE HANG MAN KILLINGS.
I THOUGHT... I DON'T KNOW WHY...
I WANTED TO BELIEVE THAT THE FIVE OF YOU WERE... UNTOUCHABLE.
BUT, WITH GUSTAVSON'S DEATH...
COMMISSIONER.
I APOLOGIZE FOR INTERRUPTING, BUT I THINK WE ALL KNOW WHERE THIS IS GOING.

DON'T GIVE UP ON US. WE KNEW THE RISKS GOING IN.
WE'RE STILL THE BEST CHANCE THIS DEPARTMENT HAS TO CATCH THIS KILLER --
-- OR YOU WOULDN'T HAVE PICKED US IN THE FIRST PLACE.

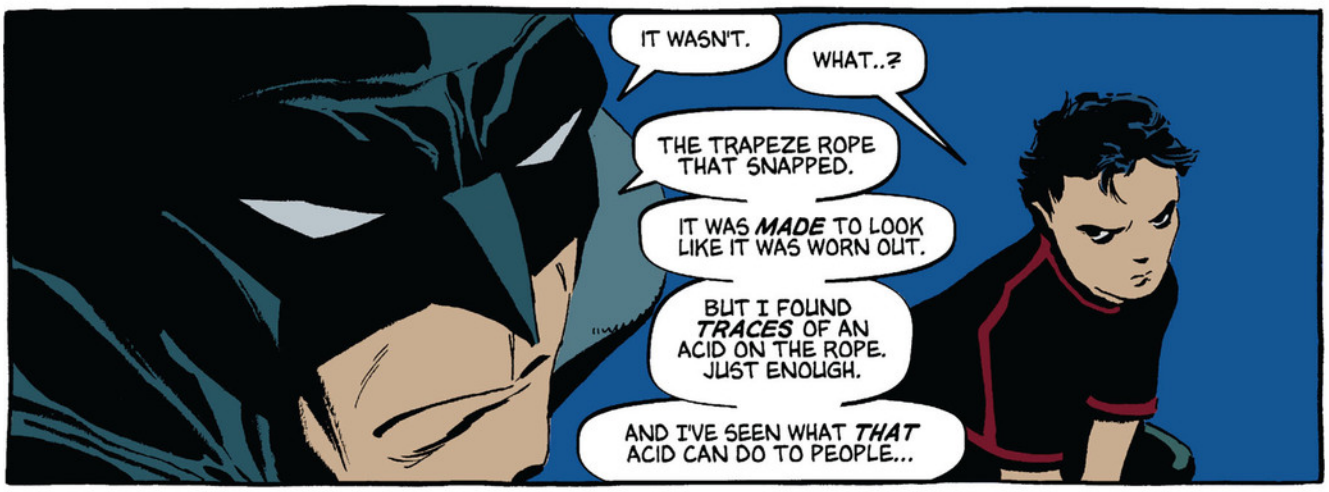
KING IS RIGHT, SIR.
IF ALL THE VICTIMS HAD PAST RELATIONSHIPS WITH HARVEY DENT -- THEN HE OR SHE OR THEY HAVE NOW BROKEN THE PATTERN WITH GUSTAVSON.
WE WANT TO KNOW WHY.
AND I KNOW IT SEEMS OBVIOUS, BUT HAS ANYONE NOTICED THAT ALL THE VICTIMS ARE MEN?


THOSE... SEEM LIKE PROMISING LEADS, LOPEZ.
IT'S LATE...
...I SHOULD GET HOME AND SPEND A FEW MINUTES WITH MY SON...
...FATHER'S DAY AND ALL...
ANY OF YOU KNOW WHERE O'CONNOR IS? HE GOT ASSIGNED AS MY DRIVER.

WILCOX..?
I SPOKE TO HIM ABOUT AN HOUR AGO.
HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO GRAB A QUICK SHOWER AND MEET US HERE...


Detective Mark O'Connor spent most of his career teaching Firearms at the Police Academy.
An expert marksman, he thought his gift was best shared with the young police officers, training them.
IRELAND
If O'Connor had been carrying his weapon, The Hang Man never would have gotten close to him.
Acid Halts D.A.'s Career

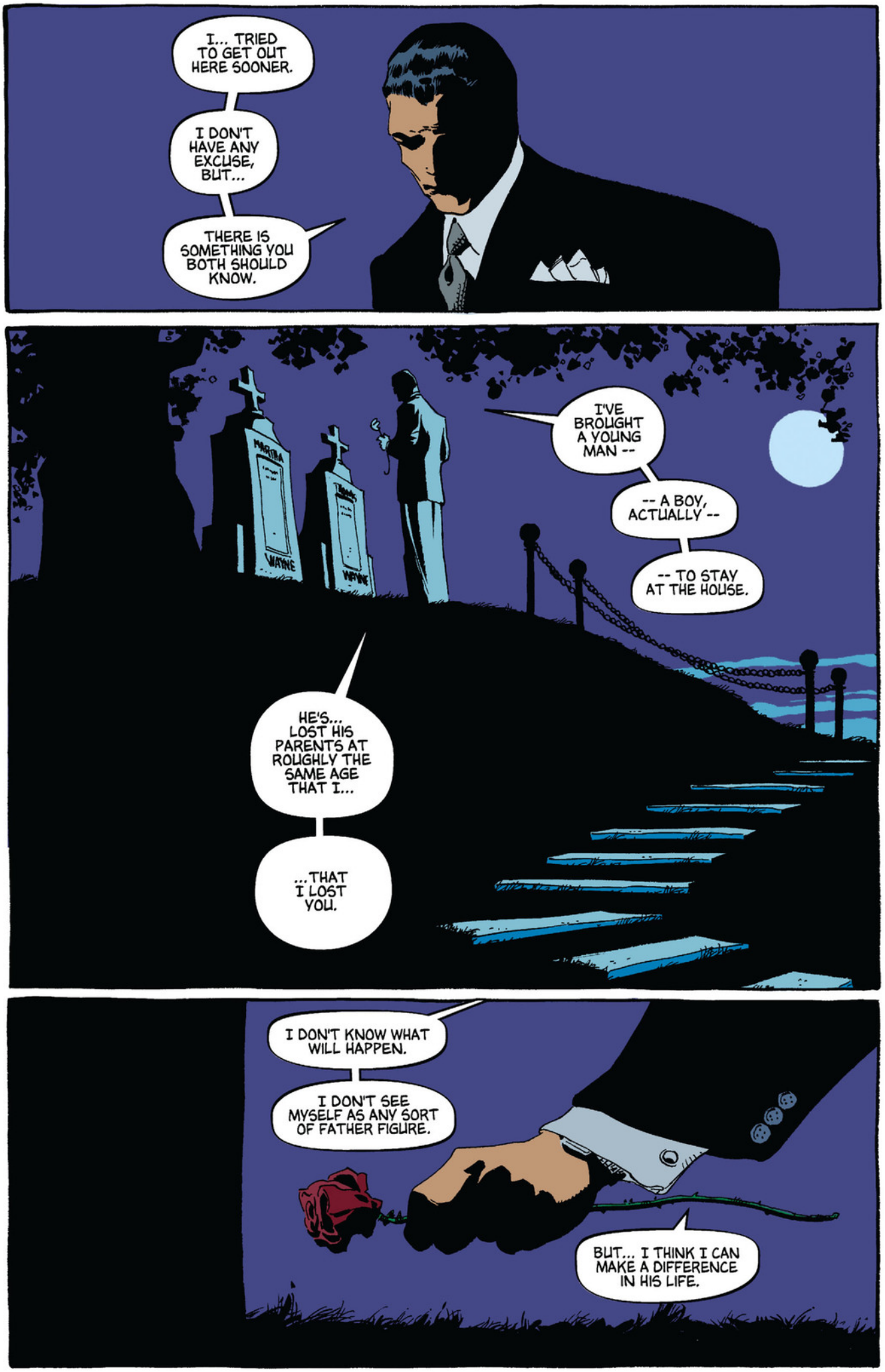
Wayne Manor.
YOU WENT OUT THERE TONIGHT. TO THE CIRCUS.
DON'T BOTHER DENYING IT.
BATMAN..?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?!
I KNOW ENOUGH.
I KEEP THINKING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
MY FATHER ALWAYS CHECKED THE LINES.
IT JUST COULDN'T BE AN ACCIDENT --!


IT WASN'T.
WHAT..?
THE TRAPEZE ROPE THAT SNAPPED.
IT WAS *MADE* TO LOOK LIKE IT WAS WORN OUT.
BUT I FOUND *TRACES* OF AN ACID ON THE ROPE. JUST ENOUGH.
AND I'VE SEEN WHAT *THAT* ACID CAN DO TO PEOPLE...

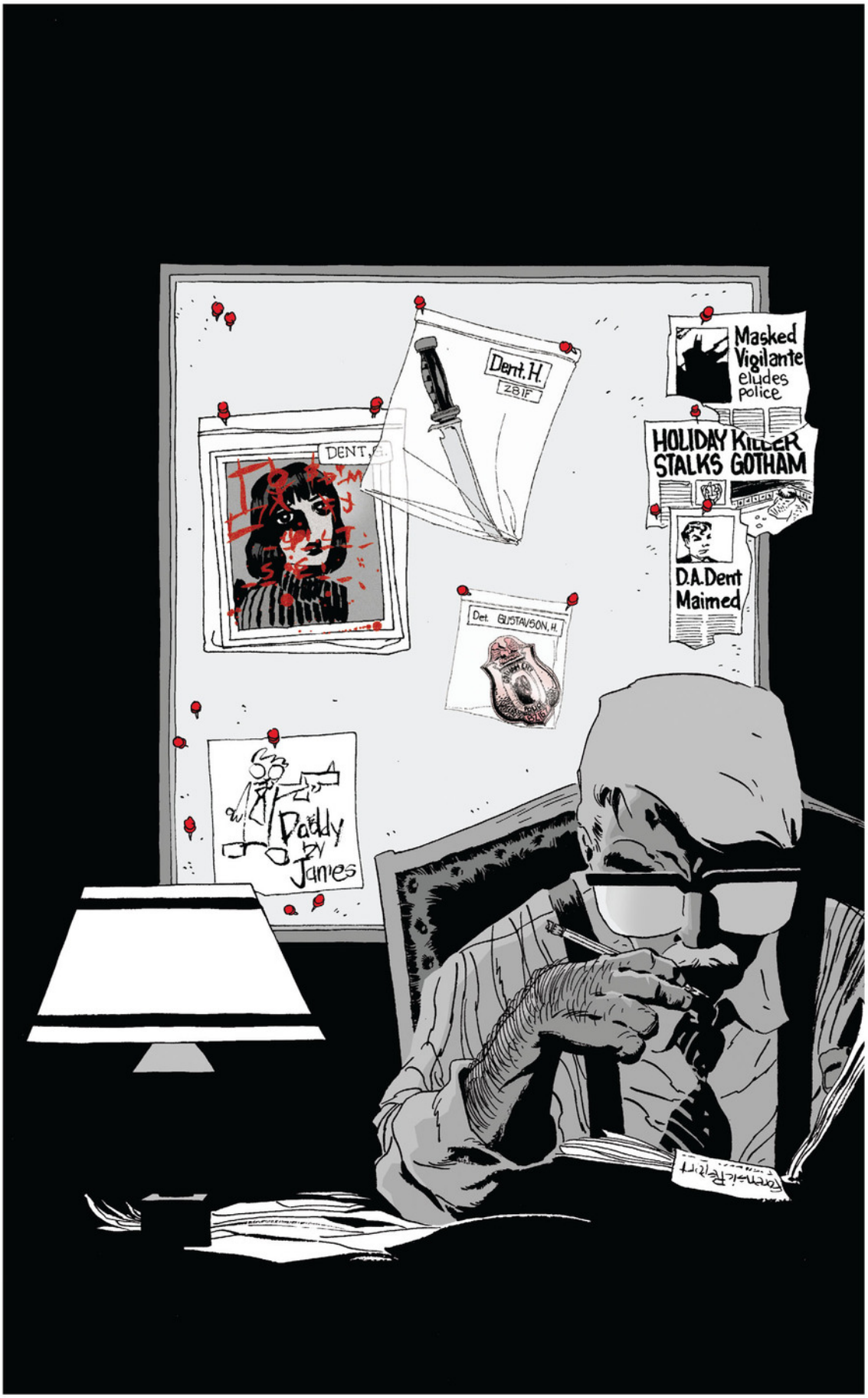
I WANT TO HELP.
YOU WILL. WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT.
I PROMISE.

I REMEMBER SEEIN' A *GUY* TALKING TO *MISTER HALY* AT THE CIRCUS.
HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HOW IT'D BE A SHAME IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO MY...
HE WAS A BIG FAT GUY.

YOU SHOULD GO BACK INSIDE NOW.


I... TRIED TO GET OUT HERE SOONER.
I DON'T HAVE ANY EXCUSE, BUT...
THERE IS SOMETHING YOU BOTH SHOULD KNOW.
MARTHA
WAYNE
WAYNE
I'VE BROUGHT A YOUNG MAN --
-- A BOY, ACTUALLY --
-- TO STAY AT THE HOUSE.
HE'S... LOST HIS PARENTS AT ROUGHLY THE SAME AGE THAT I...
...THAT I LOST YOU.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN.
I DON'T SEE MYSELF AS ANY SORT OF FATHER FIGURE.
BUT... I THINK I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HIS LIFE.

MARTHA
BELOVED
THOMAS
BELOVED
LOEB
SALE
ZK


Dent. H.
28 IF
DENT.
Masked Vigilante eludes police
HOLIDAY KILLER STALKS GOTHAM
D.A. Dent Maimed
Det. GUSTAVSON, H.
Daddy by James